

Protecting South Dakota's Rural Economy

By: Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin

As I've traveled the state recently and spoken to farmers and ranchers, utility providers, business owners, and community leaders, many South Dakotans have expressed concerns regarding EPA regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. I believe we need to act to ensure that South Dakota's rural economy is protected from overly-burdensome regulations that harm our agricultural and energy producers, and other industries.

That's why I recently signed on as a co-sponsor to what's known as a "resolution of disapproval" related to EPA's endangerment finding on greenhouse gas emissions. Importantly, the resolution is bipartisan as it was introduced by Representatives Ike Skelton, a Democrat and Jo Ann Emerson, a Republican, both from Missouri, as well as Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Collin Peterson.

The passage of this resolution would prevent EPA from enforcing regulations under the Clean Air Act. I believe the Clean Air Act was not designed to regulate greenhouse gas emissions and have concerns that any such regulation could have unintended consequences in South Dakota. Moreover, enforcing this disapproval resolution would allow Congress time to set up a new legislative framework to address climate change in a more responsible manner.

Once again, we are seeing one-size-fits-all policy being crafted by some in Washington who don't understand the unique needs and strengths of our state. In passing the Clean Air Act, Congress did not intend to give the EPA authority to regulate greenhouse gases, and this resolution makes that clear.

In addition to the resolution of disapproval, I am also a cosponsor of separate bipartisan

legislation to explicitly make clear that the Clean Air Act does not allow for regulation of greenhouse gases with respect to climate change. This legislation would also amend the 2007 Energy Bill to stop EPA from including international indirect land use changes in determining American renewable fuels policy, and would broaden the definition of renewable biomass to the Farm Bill definition.

I have also cosponsored bipartisan legislation introduced by Representative Earl Pomeroy of North Dakota entitled the Save our Energy Jobs Act, which would also prohibit the EPA from regulating greenhouse gas emissions without the explicit direction or authority from Congress to do so.

And finally, I have signed on to a bipartisan letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee responsible for determining funding levels for the EPA. This letter expresses opposition to the Administration's proposed Fiscal Year 2011 budget which funds EPA efforts to develop and implement regulations of greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, factories and agricultural operations.

Ultimately, all of these efforts seek to address the growing concerns over the EPA regulating greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. There is consensus that regardless of how we move ahead in regulating greenhouse gases, it's critical that Congress acts first. We can't simply leave it to the long arm of the EPA when it's clear they don't understand some parts of the country. The wide ranging implications of regulating greenhouse gases require consideration of economic issues as well, and EPA is not well suited to handle those issues. I'll continue to work to make sure that the voices of my constituents in South Dakota – those who understand the realities of a rural, agricultural economy – are heard.